

ILLUSIONS ON THE RAIL

Excusable Superstitions of Engineers—Shocked by Visions as Their Trains Rush Along—Flinged by the Lusty Houghs of a Pine Tree

I wonder what was the first, instantaneous sensation of that Canadian engineer who ran down Jumbo in the fog. Probably a shock, a start, a strange feeling, but about shock, strange and weird, are the portion of every man who stands at a locomotive throttle. He must get used to them and stand them as best he can—or find some occupation that will serve to strain to it. Most of them in the business get hardened to the unexpected, which is always happening on the rails.

A newly located watchman's shanty—located in a box car—was a box car—set my scalp to tingling one night. There had never been anything there but the river before, and when the headlight glared on that very substantial structure I was sure my call had arrived.

Another time a tool box in a tunnel partly covered over with clothes and a coil of rope, started me for the step under the impression that there was a rock falling from the roof, but these are more harmless superstitions which pass away. I was awake. The engine gets by them before you get off, and you are back in your seat again breathing anathema maranatha against the thoughtless idiot who was the cause of it all. Then there are the other kind.

I was poking up a long hill one night when a red light suddenly showed up followed at once by another, indicating that the caboose was coming up the hill. It was just ahead—and I was coming up the hill with astonishing rapidity. I yelled to my fireman to jump, and we had barely landed in the ditch, when six cars and the engine had already climbed all over our engine. The train had broken in two, and this was the rear section that had trundled down hill on top of us.

Frequently I have been asked if railroad men are superstitious. I think not, though they might be pardoned if they were.

One night after the meeting Fred Jones asked, with fairly well assumed indifference,

once, if "any of you fellows" had seen a suspicious stranger at night near the old station, and the time of the murder.

Two or three of the men looked around quick and sharp, as though the question reminded them of something, but nobody admitted he had.

"I've already said Fred, puffing at his cigar like a 'mog' on a grade. 'I've seen 'im twice, 'I danced 'im 'round make it out. 'I've seen 'im 'round the station. 'I told me that on two occasions, on 't' night trip, a fellow had sprung out from the bushes, run right up to the engine and flagged him with a lamp, although it was night-time, but with a flag, 'I knowed 'im, but 'I don't know 'im name to be found, nor was there any occasion for 'm chasing."

"On the second occasion his conductor hinted with railroad frankness that Jones was a suspicious character, and in regard the fellow's signal if he ever saw him again. As to details, he remembered 'im body, but not his name, and the moonlight and that a good breeze was blowing."

About two months later, along in the fall, after a heavy rain, Jones ran into a bad rock-slide a quarter of a mile before he could get to the station. He was killed, but he escaped with a sprained ankle. He came hobbling up to me a week or two later, and said:

"Run, 'I done 'it."

"Run, what?"

"Run, by that stone house flagman I was to see a fellow, and I wonder if they think 'im dopey now."

He went on to tell me that the same fellow had been in the same place the accident; but, with his good name in mind, he dropped her down a notch, breathed a sigh of relief, and then he said he would wait through the cut, tail on end, and only to pile up on the slide a moment later.

One night, a long time after that, it was killing time on a clearance. The moon was about above the station in the west, and there was a stiff breeze from the same quarter. I remembered the fellow, and I decided to go out. I never have a better chance to get caught. I shut off and let her roll on approaching the station.

Waving shadows on the track, cast by the trees, and the moon, and the station, suggested a possible solution of the mystery. I kept my eyes fastened religiously on the shadows, and I saw something there. Gradually the thing took form, until, with a gasp, I saw a man, and I swore that a man was in front of me waving a flag.

The crickets, stored right down and gave an answering too too, but he paid

no attention. Then I crawled out on the roof, looked up and looked down. The fish was just visible above the bank at my right. As the moon, myself, and the man came to the bank, the fish was in a small distance, and I observed that a small pine tree on the bank was also coming into view. In such a way, the fish was to complete the flagman spread out and lost form.

Not time I saw Jones I told him about it, and he exclaimed:

"What a beautiful sight!"

On his next day off Jones deadheaded to the station near the stone house and came back with a fish. The fish was a spook flagman never bothered him nor anyone else thereafter.—New York Sun.

WONDERS OF THE SEAS.

Fish That Can Sing when in Their Native Element.

(From The New York Press.)

It may be that sometime in the future there will appear a marine Prof. Garner, who will declare that fish talk and try to tell us the secrets of the deep. The fishes and other waters of the earth. If a fish cannot talk it is certain that some species of fish can sing. The singing of the fish, a species of eel is extremely musical, and it is said that the eel can sing a long-drawn note, something like the note of a tin horn. The eel is also musically inclined, and it is said that the eel can be heard for a considerable distance.

Probably the most remarkable sound-making fish is the eel. It is said that it was discovered by Lieutenant White, of the British Navy. The lieutenant was on a voyage to the coast of Africa, and he was near the entrance to a river. He anchored his vessel for the night in shallow water, and he was surprised to find a coming up from beneath the waves a strange confusion of sounds.

The sounds were a low, muffled, and bells and the beating of drums and naturally filled the lieutenant with astonishment. He was so much inclined to hear such sounds coming up from the depths of the sea. The next day he went to the place, told the lieutenant that the sounds often were heard from the depths of the sea, and that the spirits of a crew of pirates who had been drowned there years before. Not having any other explanation, the lieutenant investigated the strange phenomenon, and finally established the fact that the sounds were made by the eel, who were eating small fish which were common in those waters.

Koelliker's recent experiments were most interesting. He made a submarine photograph which he let down to a depth of thirty fathoms. He saw a small fish. Around the instrument were

Among other results which he obtained was the getting of a fish, a shark which the fish uttered as he dashed toward the glare of the electric lights. The shark uttered a noise which was usually when they are near land, are more like talking than singing. The whale, also, has been recorded as uttering a noise, but several. In the Gulf of Mexico is found a brilliantly colored fish, called the "fire fish," which utters a peculiar call, which can be heard from one end of a long ship to the other.

It is not known whether the elements is that none of these fishes which are known to make these noises while in the water. The fish which is the first taken out of it. The Castle Garden Aquarium might and to its attractiveness by the fact that it is the only place in the city where one can see a fish singing fish in tanks would be a decided novelty. In Castle Garden Aquarium, the first fish to be taken out of the water, this noisy fish. Perhaps in Castle Garden will be given the first "fish concert."